

POLS 2311-007



rozannehakala.photoshelter.com

WELCOME TO US GOVERNMENT

Let me guess—you are all *so*very*excited* to be here, right? After careful consideration of all your course options, you chose this one, right? Oh. No? You're here because it's a requirement to graduate?

Fear not! This class will be relevant to your daily life. It will be interesting. In short, it will not suck. And you will also learn some pretty interesting and valuable things along the way.

For instance, have you ever wondered why government works (or doesn't) the way it does? Have you ever considered why the US Congress passes some laws but not others? Why people choose to run for elected office and, relatedly, why we have the candidates we do? What about the US Supreme Court? It's "supposed" to be unbiased and above politics, right? (Spoiler alert: maybe, not so much.)

This class will explore all these questions and more in three sections: foundations (why do we have what we have); people (who participates and how); branches of government (what in the world are our public servants doing in DC).

Even if your first reaction isn't to be overjoyed to be in the class (or maybe it is!), I am pretty dang excited to spend the semester with you. I have specific learning goals for you (see page 4), and there are rules and policies to the course (see pages 6-8) but most of all, I want you to see how you can make a difference in your communities and have an influence on the political process.

IMPORTANT COURSE DETAILS

We meet Tuesday/Thursday, 2:00-3:20 in UH 115. My office is located in the Department of Political Science offices, UH 206. Ask for me at the front desk. My office hours are Tuesdays from 11:00-11:50 and Wednesdays from 1:30-2:30 or by appointment.

We use Blackboard (BB) extensively for announcements, course content and some course assignments. If you've never used BB, start here: www.uta.edu/blackboard.



The required text for the course is *American Politics Today*, 5th edition essential. Here's an Amazon link (though I encourage you to use the campus bookstore) so you can make sure you have the correct version: <https://www.amazon.com/American-Politics-Today-Essentials-Fifth/dp/0393283615>.

DR. REBECCA E. DEEN

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- Chair of the Department of Political Science and Associate Professor
- <https://mentis.uta.edu/explore/profile/rebecca-deen>

GET SOCIAL WITH POLS



@POLSatUTarlington



@polsutarlington

<https://youtu.be/gEIy6HkF5ms>

COURSE SCHEDULE



Section 1

January 16	Introduction, Policies and procedures
January 18	Class via Blackboard, see Course Materials tab in BB
January 23	What is government? (1)
January 25-30	Colonial governments and the Constitution (2, Appendix 1, 2)
January 31	Census day
February 1-6	Federalism (3)
February 8	Class via Blackboard, see Course Materials tab in BB
February 13-15	Civil Liberties (5)
February 20-22	Civil Rights (6)
February 27	Exam 1 in class

Section 2

March 1-6	Public opinion (10, 12)
March 8	Class via Blackboard, see Course Materials tab in BB
March 12-16	Spring Break
March 20-22	Elections (14)
March 27-29	Media (11)
March 30	Last day to drop
April 3	Parties (15)
April 5	Exam 2 in class

Section 3	
April 10	Congress (7)
April 12	Class via Blackboard, see Course Materials tab in BB
April 17	Congress continued
April 19-24	Presidency (8)
April 26-May 1	Courts (4)
May 3	TBD

Tuesday, May 8th, 2:00-4:30 FINAL EXAM.

See [here](#) for full exam schedule.

<— CHANGES
MAY OCCUR

If there are changes to the schedule they will be announced in class and on BB.

Make sure you come to class and monitor BB!



Well, except for secrets to success, how your grade is determined, policies, more policies...

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL

Come to class. Take notes. Review early (not the night before the exam). Come to office hours. Ask for help. Make a friend and study together. Read the textbook.

What? No magic wand? No Accio Grade-A-us? (I see you, Harry Potter fans.)

Sadly, predictably, the usual advice really is the best. Just for you, I've listed them in order of what I have seen in my many years of teaching as the most important.

COME TO CLASS. Seriously. I will do my best to make it interesting and relevant but I'm only one side of this relationship. You have to show up.



Don't just be in class physically. Come invested in your own learning (you're paying for it after all) and ready to engage. That means writing down more than what's on the screen/board. It also means listening to lecture and discussion and taking notes to help you remember what you've heard.

The last four are really all part of the same thing, which is that there are resources to help you. If you are confused, ask me. If you aren't grasping the material, come see me. If you aren't meeting your goals, let's work together.

"If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else." – Booker T. Washington (Studying together really does help.)

GRADES

There are three ways your performance will be assessed this semester: exams, Blackboard discussions and general participation. The final grade will be determined using the following weighting system:

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	25%
Final exam	30%
BB discussion	20%
Participation	5%

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A	90-100%
B	80 - 89%
C	70 - 79%
D	60 - 69%
F	below 60%

LEARNING GOALS

What do I want for you in this class?

By the end of the semester you will be able to:

- ◇ Demonstrate a well-rounded knowledge of American government and politics.
- ◇ Demonstrate an understanding of how political scientists analyze and interpret the foundations, institutions, processes, and actors that constitute American government and politics.
- ◇ Demonstrate critical thought about American government and politics.



What mountain do you want to climb?

YOUR GOALS

The more important question is what do you want out of the class? If it's just to pass, you can probably accomplish that with only coming to class and cramming for the exams.

If you want to learn and really grow as a thinking person, you'll need to devote some time to the class. Here are my suggestions beyond what I said on page 4:

- ◇ Each week review your notes and figure out where the holes are. Fill those holes (ask me or your study-buddy).
- ◇ About a week before the exam, start to make a plan for studying. Put your study times on your calendar—schedule your success! Give yourself at least three study sessions.
- ◇ For each session, set a goal of what you will master. Quiz yourself to see if you've got it. Try to teach someone else (your study buddy, your teddy bear, your roommate, Alexa or Siri). This will tell you if you've really understood the material.
- ◇ The night before the exam—SLEEP!
- ◇ The day of the exam—EAT!
- ◇ At the exam—RELAX—you've got this.

EMAIL

Email is a primary method of communication in this class, including Blackboard announcements sent as an email. Any assignments sent via email will be confirmed as received by the instructor. Students should seek this confirmation and if it is not sent should assume the instructor did not receive the email. I will generally respond to email within one business day. If I haven't responded, please resend as the message may not have gotten through.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE TIPS:

- ◇ Begin your email with a salutation (i.e., "Dear Professor Deen") that isn't "Hey dude."
- ◇ Sign your name
- ◇ Indicate in the subject line the class you are in. While you are important to me, I have lots of other kinds of messages in my inbox. Lots.
- ◇ Start the email with the main reason for the message.
- ◇ These tips apply to professional communication, even when we send email from mobile devices.

IN THE KNOW

Academic Plaza Consultation Services library.uta.edu/academic-plaza

Ask Us ask.uta.edu/

Library Tutorials library.uta.edu/how-to

Subject and Course Research Guides libguides.uta.edu

Librarians by Subject library.uta.edu/subject-librarians

Research Coaches <http://libguides.uta.edu/researchcoach>

Study Room Reservations openroom.uta.edu/

EMERGENCY

NUMBERS

In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at

817-272-3003 (non-campus phone),

2-3003 (campus phone).

You may also dial **911**.

Non-emergency number **817-272-3381**

E COMMUNICATION

Electronic Communication:

UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc.

All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using

MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

SAFETY

Campus Carry: Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located on the south side of the hallway. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

Students should also be encouraged to subscribe to the MavAlert system that will send information in case of an emergency to their cell phones or email accounts. Anyone can subscribe at <https://mavalert.uta.edu/> or <https://mavalert.uta.edu/register.php>

END OF THE SEMESTER

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

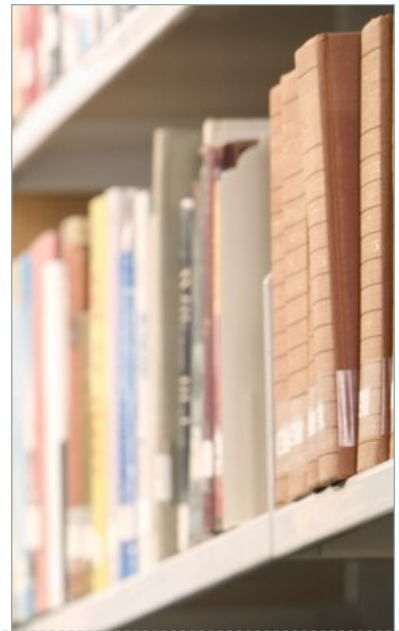
Final Review Week: A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabus. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

FREE HELP

The IDEAS Center (2nd Floor of Central Library) offers FREE tutoring to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. Students can drop in, or check the schedule of available peer tutors at www.uta.edu/IDEAS, or call (817) 272-6593.

The English Writing Center (411LIBR): The Writing Center offers FREE tutoring in 15-, 30-, 45-, and 60-minute face-to-face and online sessions to all UTA students on any phase of their UTA coursework. Register and make appointments online at <https://uta.mywconline.com>. Classroom visits, workshops, and specialized services for graduate students and faculty are also available. Please see www.uta.edu/owl for detailed information on all our programs and services.

The Library's 2nd floor Academic Plaza offers students a central hub of support services, including IDEAS Center, University Advising Services, Transfer UTA and various college/school advising hours. Services are available during the library's hours of operation. <http://library.uta.edu/academic-plaza>



"You have brains in your head and feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose." Dr. Seuss

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.

University Tutorial & Supplemental Instruction (Ransom Hall 205): UTSI offers a variety of academic support services for undergraduate students, including: 60 minute one-on-one tutoring sessions, Start Strong Freshman tutoring program, and Supplemental Instruction. Office hours are Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm. For more information visit www.uta.edu/utsi or call 817-272-2617.



UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Americans with Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Title IX: The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law "Title IX" such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX.

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Stuff happens; that's part of life. Another part of life is showing up to required events, like exams. So, no makeup will be scheduled for the **EXAMS or the FINAL** except for medical reasons or extreme circumstances. Instructor must be notified in advance of the exam to schedule such a make-up. Written documentation of the extreme circumstance may be required and students should expect documentation to be verified. I hate that I have to say this, but you would be surprised (or not) at the number of times people try to scam me.

Speaking of not being a scammer, here's the University's policy on academic integrity: Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code: I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence. I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

Per UT System Regents' Rule 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

No incompletes will be given unless you provide a signed doctor's statement indicating you are too ill to complete the course. Student should expect this documentation to be verified.

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).